Indian Coastal Waters Grave-Yards for Old Ships

*140.SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: SHRI C.RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether coastal waters and ports in India have become graveyards for old ships as reported in the Asian Age dated the 7th September, 1998.

(b) the action proposed to fix responsibility on owners to remove wreckage of vessels; and

(c) the steps proposed to empower Coast Guard to check sea-worthiness of ships operating in Indian Waters?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M.THAMBI DURAI): (a) It is not correct to say that the coastal waters and ports in India have become graveyards for old ships.

(b) While action to fix responsibility on owners of sunken vessels in the port Limits is taken under the Major Port Trusts Act which expressly provides that the responsibility of removal of wreck rests on the owners of the ship, responsi bility of removal of wreck occurring out side port limits but in India's territorial waters, has not been expressly imposed on the ship owners under the existing porvjsions of the Merchant Shipping Act.

Action has already been initiated to amend the relevant provisions of the Act.

(c) There is no proposal to empower Coast Guard to check Sea-worthiness of ships operating in Indian Waters.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Amount spent by Al on public relations

931. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:
SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India has been suffering loss as shown in the results of first half of the current year;

(b) the amount of loss likely to be at the end of the year;

(c) the cumulative losses incurred by Air India;

(d) the amount spent by Air India on public relations during the last year;

(e) the justification in spending large sums on-public relations; and

(f) the steps being taken to improve financial condition of Air India?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and "(b) Yes, Sir. The budgeted loss for 1998-99 is estimated to be Rs.340.72 crores.

(c) The cumulative loss of Air India upto 31st March, 1998 is Rs.749.79 crores.

(d) and (e) The amount spent by Air India on publicity and sales promotion during the year 1997-98 was Rs.21.02 crores. The amount was spent mainly on advertising campaign on image development of the company.

(f) Air India Limited has taken the following steps to improve the financial performance:—

(i) Marketing efforts have been stepped up to generate additional revenue.

(ii) Network rationalization and consolidation with emphasis placed on route profitability,

(iii) Reduction in expenditure on outside repairs of aircraft by undertaking more in-house repairs,

(iv) Several posts of India based officers abroad have been abolished.

The Government has constituted a Committee of experts under the Chairmanship of Dr.Vijay Kelkar, at present Finance Secretary, Government of India to undertake a comprehensive examination of the reason for the losses incurred by the Air India and to suggest strategics for turning around the company.